

**For More Information Contact Your  
NRCS/Conservation District Office**

<http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov>

**Belknap County**

719 Main St., Rm 203  
Laconia, NH 03246-2772  
(603) 527-5800

**Carroll County**

73 Main Street  
PO Box 533  
Conway, NH 03818-0533  
(603) 447-2771

**Cheshire County**

11 Industrial Park Drive  
Walpole, NH 03608-9744  
(603) 756-2988

**Coos County**

4 Mayberry Lane  
Lancaster, NH 03584-9612  
(603) 788-4651

**Grafton County**

250 Swiftwater Road, Rm 6  
Woodsville, NH 03785-0229  
(603) 747-2001

**NRCS Field Office**

Telly's Plaza, 243 Calef Highway  
Epping, NH 03042  
(603) 679-1587

**North Country RC&D**

719 North Main Street  
Laconia, NH 03246-2772  
(603) 527-2093

**Hillsborough County**

Chappell Prof. Center  
#468, Route 13  
Milford, NH 03055-3442  
(603) 673-2409

**Merrimack County**

The Concord Center  
10 Ferry St., Box 312  
Concord, NH 03301-5081  
(603) 223-6023

**Rockingham County**

110 North Road  
Brentwood, NH 03833-6614  
(603) 679-2790

**Strafford County**

259 County Farm Rd #3  
Dover, NH 03820-6015  
(603) 749-3037

**Sullivan County**

24 Main Street  
Newport, NH 03773-1500  
(603) 863-4297

**NRCS State Office**

Federal Building  
Durham, NH 03824  
(603) 868-7581

**Southern NH RC&D**

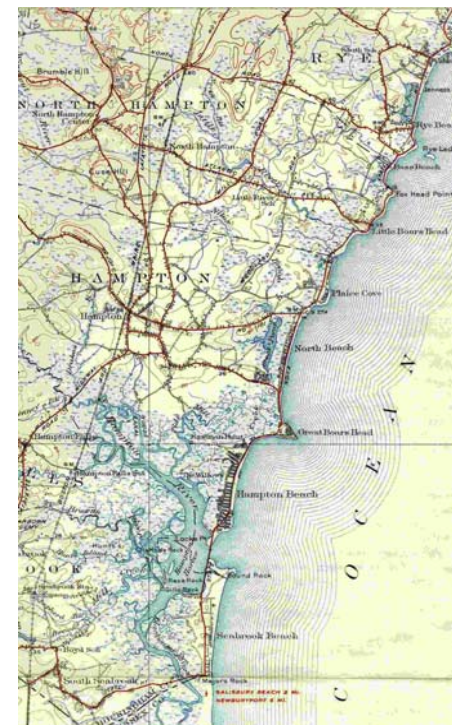
The Concord Center  
10 Ferry Street, Box 4  
Concord, NH  
(603) 223-0083

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## Let's Restore New Hampshire's Salt Marshes



## What is a salt marsh?

A healthy salt marsh is a complex ecosystem delicately balanced between the marine and terrestrial environments. It appears as a flat, low growing, meadow of lush, salt tolerant, grasses dotted here and there with shallow saline pools called pannes. A system of meandering creeks distributes tidal water throughout a healthy salt marsh. Because they are intimately associated with tidal waters, salt marshes in New Hampshire are only found along the coast and around the Great Bay estuary. There are about 6,200 acres of salt marsh in New Hampshire.

## Why are they important?

Healthy salt marshes provide many important values to the residents of New Hampshire's coast. They are habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Some wildlife species such as sharp-tailed sparrows are only found in healthy salt marshes. Salt marshes are major feeding grounds for snowy egrets and great blue herons.

Salt marshes improve the water quality of coastal waters. They are visually attractive and provide open space along the coast. Healthy marshes breed fewer mosquitoes than deteriorating marshes. Unhealthy salt marshes may become overgrown by invasive plants like phragmites and purple loosestrife that have a low value for wildlife.

## Why do they need restoration?

Some of our salt marshes have been degraded by human activity. A healthy salt marsh has several requirements the most important being adequate tidal flow. In some places, tidal flow is blocked by roads, railroads, and other

restrictions. Many road culverts along the coast were sized to handle upland runoff but are inadequate to allow the twice-daily tidal cycle to bring salt water into the marsh. Tidal flow is the lifeblood of salt marshes.

## Restoring Salt Marshes

There are three steps in restoring salt marshes (or any other native ecosystem).

- Understand the ecosystem under natural conditions.
- Understand the human caused stressors that have degraded it.
- Figure out how to relieve the stressors.

NRCS will work with landowners to develop a restoration plan tailored to their specific situation. Participation in these programs is voluntary. Restoration measures include replacement of road culverts and ditching to restore a system of tidal creeks. In some cases, planting of native species and the chemical control of invasive plants is also recommended. Federal and state cost-share programs are available to help landowners restore salt marshes on their property.

## Joint Efforts

Many landowners are working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and County Conservation Districts to restore salt marshes on their property. Cooperating in this effort are state, federal and town agencies and non-profit groups. Included are the Conservation Commissions of coastal towns, New Hampshire Coastal Program, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Bay Estuarine

Research Reserve, Wells Estuarine Research Reserve, NH Natural Heritage Program, and the University of New Hampshire.

## What can you do?

First, learn about the importance of keeping salt marshes healthy. Call one of the offices listed on the back of this brochure. Help educate your neighbors about the importance of salt marshes to the ecology of New Hampshire's coast and the Gulf of Maine.

Second, learn to use the tools available to help you evaluate the potential for restoring salt marshes in your community. These include the "Method for the Evaluation and Inventory of Vegetated Tidal Marshes in New Hampshire," written by Audubon Society of New Hampshire and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Third, volunteer to take an active role in salt marsh evaluation, monitoring, and restoration. Many coastal towns in New Hampshire are getting involved in maintaining the health of our coastal marshes. Over 500 acres of salt marsh are now being restored through the cooperative efforts of Agencies and citizen volunteers.

There are many opportunities for citizens to participate in ongoing restoration and monitoring of salt marshes in New Hampshire. Contact your nearest NRCS and Conservation District office. They will assist you in determining if you have a potential restoration site on your property. They can also offer assistance on restoring other important ecosystems such as Pine Barrens, fresh water wetlands and grasslands.